

## **Senate Bill 1054, An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia**

**From Adam Glassman**

**Orange, Connecticut**

My name is Adam Glassman. I am eleven years old. I live in Orange, Connecticut. I am here to speak in support of Senate Bill 1054, An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia. In this bill please include early screening and identification of dyslexia and intervention for dyslexic students.

I am dyslexic. I found out that I was dyslexic at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. My mom knew when I was in kindergarten but the school district didn't believe it. If I got the help I needed earlier, school wouldn't be so hard. The teachers could have helped me. It is hard to keep up in class because reading and writing are difficult for me. I am good at science and math but my dyslexia affects them too. I enjoy building creations with my Legos and working on my Boy Scout requirements. There is less time for me to do things that are fun because my homework takes longer every year.

Please add early screening and identification of dyslexia to the bill. We need early identification of dyslexia because kids shouldn't have to wait to get help. The longer the wait, the harder school gets. Before I got the proper help, I was falling behind. My reading level was much lower than my friends. I couldn't read the same things my friends were reading. I felt upset because I would wish I could read the Magic Tree House books and other chapter books like my friends. By the time I could actually read the series, my friends were done with them and I was no longer interested. I wish the school knew I was dyslexic in kindergarten because I wouldn't have continued to fall behind my friends.

It is very important that teachers get training on dyslexia. Some people think that dyslexics read backwards. My teachers don't understand me! I have had lunch detention and extra homework because of my slower work. I have been placed with struggling math students, because I am slower and don't test well. I have a lot of information in my brain but it is hard to put it on paper. The teachers try to blame my slower pace on behavior. Teachers have even called me lazy. It isn't that I don't want to do my work; I just work slower than everyone else. Sometimes I need to be taught differently. If the teachers understood dyslexia, they would know how to help me. My brain works differently than my friends. I am able to complete the work but need accommodations to help me.

Sometimes my dyslexia can be embarrassing in school. When I stumble on a word other kids will tell me the word loudly without giving me a chance on my own. I don't like when teachers ask me to read out loud. I read slower than everyone else, so it makes it obvious.

Most teachers tell me that I should be reading a book and not listening to them. Sometimes they say it in front of some other kids. This makes it harder for me because then kids will tease me. Some of the kids tell me that using audio books is cheating. It is also embarrassing to read leveled books much lower than my friends, especially when I can understand books that I hear read much higher than I can eye read them.

Every school should have someone trained in Orton Gillingham. I finally got an Orton Gillingham teacher the summer of my 4<sup>th</sup> grade year. My Orton Gillingham teacher helps me with reading, writing and spelling. Since she has worked with me, my reading level has improved. Some of things that she has used to teach me are sand, a magic board, magnets and card packs with sounds. She is teaching me the way the English language works. I wish I got her help earlier. She has taught me tricks to remember different spelling and reading rules. She has even helped me with some math tricks. She is the only teacher that understands my dyslexia and how I learn. We work at my pace. This is the multi-sensory approach every dyslexic child should receive.

There are many famous dyslexics that have done great things and were great creators. I was lucky to meet Henry Winkler who is dyslexic. He is a famous actor and wrote books for dyslexic kids. His books are based on his childhood. Thomas Edison was dyslexic. I did a report on him in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. We wouldn't have light bulbs if it weren't for Thomas Edison. Walt Disney was dyslexic. If it wasn't for him, we wouldn't have the Greatest Place on Earth...Disney World. Alexander Graham Bell was dyslexic and invented the telephone. These people all struggled through school too. If we identify and help kids early, they will realize they are not stupid and maybe one day can do great things too.

All dyslexic kids should be able to keep up with their friends by being identified early and getting the proper help. 1 in 5 kids are dyslexic. Teachers need to understand our disability and know how to teach us. Please help me and other kids like me by passing Senate Bill 1054, An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia.